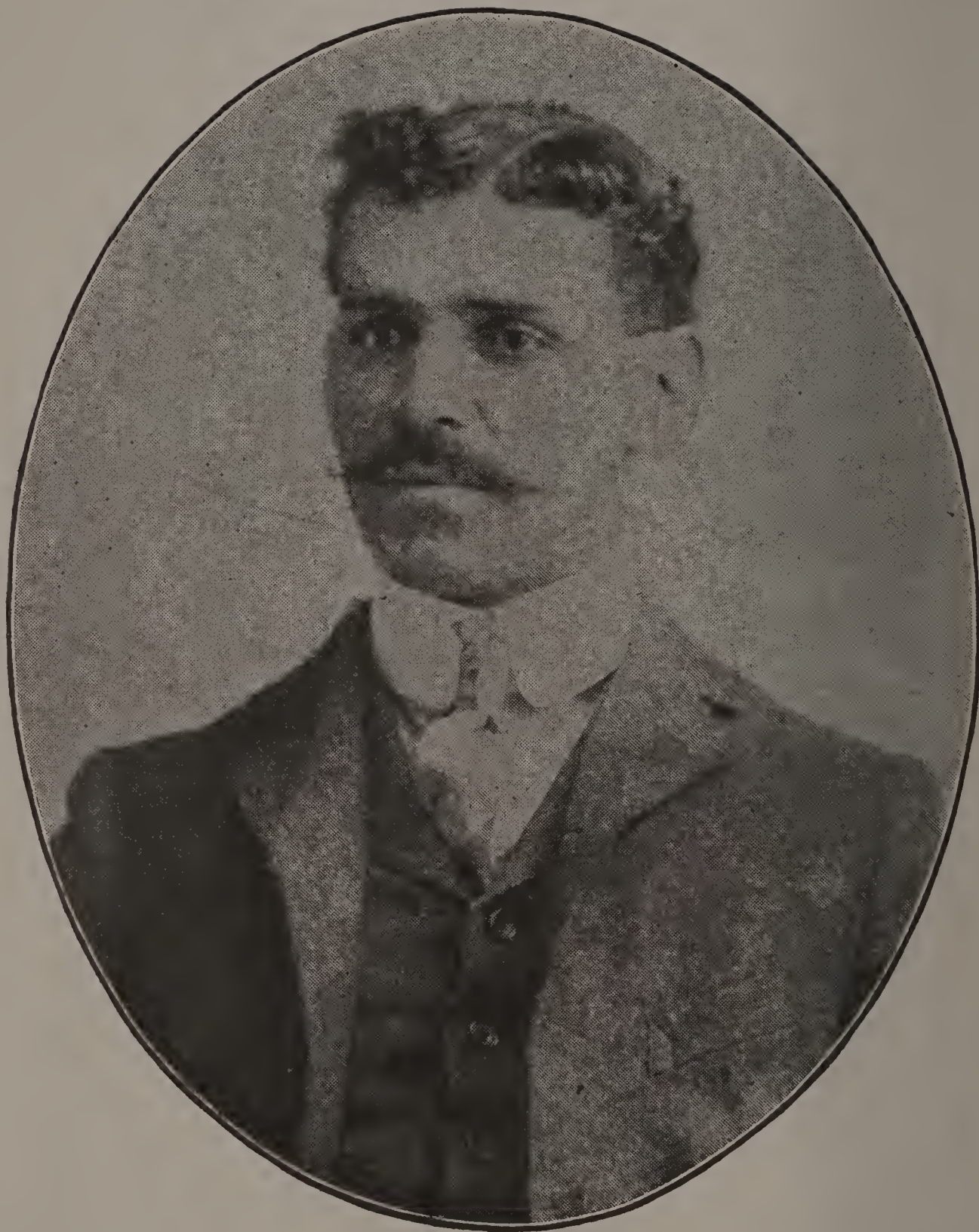


GRAVE
... AND ...
COMIC
RHYMES



BY
P. W. GIBSON.



P. W. GIBSON.

GRAVE
..... **AND**
COMIC
RHYMES



BY
P. W. GIBSON.

*Copyright, 1901,
by P. W. Gibson.*

*Murray Bros., Printers,
Alexandria, Va.*

LIBRARY of CONGRESS
Two Copies Received
JAN 1 1904
Copyright Entry
Sep 10 - 1904
CLASS a XXo. No.
96313
COPY B

PS 3513
I 277 G7
1901.



Ch. 74 R., 12 Dec. 2, 1932

To
MY MOTHER.

PREFACE.

In offering the following poems to the public, it would, perhaps, be expedient to mention, that the desire to write brilliant verses has been subordinated to the desire of maintaining a consistency with clearness.

The criticism, *pro et con*, with which all enterprises invariably meet, is too well understood to warrant anything in the way of a special appeal for this humble enterprise.

Yet, while there has been no attempt to imitate the lofty style and precision which characterise the works of the greatest writers, it is hoped that those who peruse this little volume, will aim at least, to realize the author's honest endeavor to convey moral precepts through the medium of plain verses.

P. W. GIBSON

Middleburg, Va.,

May, 1904.

CONTENTS.

- I. Progress of the Afro-American
- II. Ode to Frederick Douglass.
- III. Envy.
- IV. Fame.
- V. The Lovers' Peril.
- VI. Praise.
- VII. Rough Riders' Relief.
- VIII. Conscience.
- IX. Ode to Booker T. Washington.
- X. De Sun Do Move.
- XI. The Egyptian Sphinx.
- XII. Friendship.
- XIII. High Toned Sal.
- XIV. Too Many Cloes.
- XV. Udder Peoples' Troubles.
- XVI. The Dying Cavalier.
- XVII. 'Splain Me Dat.
- XVIII. Civil Rights.
- XIX. Adversity.
- XX. De Millon Patch.
- XXI. Ingratitude.
- XXII. The Fox and The Grapes.
- XXIII. The Auction Block.
- XXIV. The Traveler's Return.

I

Progress of the Afro-American.

Across the dark Atlantic waves

A vessel sailed from Africa's shore,
Bearing twenty stalwart slaves
To toil at Jamestown years ago.

Torn from the land where they were free,
Severed from friends and kindred dear,
They were deprived of liberty,
And taught the master's lash to fear.

No books were to the slaves allowed,
That they might learn to read and write.
Covered were they by ignorance's cloud,
Without a gleam their way to light.

Many long years their doom was cast
To toil in slavery's direful chains,
To fell the oak in the wintry blast,
To raise the cotton on Georgia's plains.

At last the noble Lincoln came
To bid their galling bondage cease;
Freedom to all he did proclaim,
And slaves rejoiced at dawn of peace.

Set free with naught save brawny arms,
To battle for life as men imbued.
With iron will to brave the storms
Which check them in each course pursued

In a few short years the the race has come
Up civilization's height sublime,
Which took great Carthage, Greece, and Rome
Long centuries of toil to climb.

Then colored youth be not dismayed;
If high in life you'd carve your name,
In the armor of Douglass be arrayed,
And climb the lofty ladder of fame.

Ode to Frederick Douglass.

On dizzy height of gorgeous fame,
Where each immortal deed reclines
In the zenith like a radiant star,
The name of Frederick Douglass shines.

Born unlike a regnant prince
Whose hours are passed in sweet content ;
Amid wild scenes on a planter's farm,
His early childhood days were spent.

Indisposed to spend his life
With slavish gyves upon his hands,
He freed himself; went to the North,
And dropped forever his iron bands.

Endowed with a bold aspiring will,
Which servile bonds could not subdue;
His aim was fixed on noble deeds,
O'er paths which great heroes pursue.

O'er all the land his voice was heard
Pleading for humble slave-cursed men—
Pleading that Freedom's holy light
Might on his helpless race descend.

Then let the name of that great chief,
Be praised on every sea and land;
For Frederick Douglass was indeed
A noble, grand, immortal man.

III.

Envy.

In trablin' 'long life's weary road,
You's moughty apt ter find
Dat when you strikes er stream er luck,
It meks some soul repine.

When in de frong you shakes de hand
Ob de charmin' belle you meets,
Somebody 'hime you'll want you blood
Fer treadin' on him feets.

De mo' you steps from right ter lef'
Ter gib him room an' a'r,
De mo' he wanter stop you bref—
His corns is ebry whar.

An' eben wid money which is y'own,
Er good ole ham you buy;
He gibs you dagger glances
Out de corner ub his eye.

He seems ter carry mortal pain
Ebry whar he goes,
'Cuz he cain eat up all de grub,
An' w'ar out all de cloes.

When de groun' is full ub snow
Dats hard ter trabel fru,
Be thankful to you nabor ef
He breks de track fer you.

An' when he trabels honor's path,
Which am hard ter climb.
Instid ub tryin' ter trip him up,
Jes foller on behime.

An' doan you stop ter fret and fume
When folks gouge at you name;
But keep er steppin' onward, an'
You'll "git dar jes de same."

'Cuz w'ile you's lookin' roun' ter see
Who's frowin' sticks an' stones,
Somebody'll win de prize who aint
So careful 'bout dey bones.

IV.

Fame.

Struggling up life's steepest stair,
Which only the chosen few need dare,
The banner of right unfurling there,
In mankind's name.

Stumbling, yet rising, o'er trials hard,
By roses gladdened, by cruel thorns scarred,
Reaping abuse, then final reward—
And this is fame.

V.

The Lovers' Peril.

A lover and a maiden fair
 Strolled gayly down across the lea;
The evening sky and balmy air
 Lent rapture to their ecstasy.

The merry song birds in the trees
 Warbled forth sweet tuneful lays;
Spring flowers rare perfumed the breeze;
 With joy all nature seemed ablaze.

Down by the sea an idle barge,
 Gently rocked by flowing tide,
Anchored safe by cable large,
 Tempted a trial on the waters wide.

Soon from anchor the gallant youth
 With eager hands the boat unchained;
The lovely maiden, emblem of truth,
 Trusted his muscular arms, well-trained.

A lurch, a splash of water gray,
 And steady strokes with pliant oar,
With merry jest and laughter gay,
 They soon were wafted far from shore.

The same sweet story of love each told,
Each vowed faithful to remain,
Through life's dark years of storm and cold,
'Till death should make the final claim.

Forgetting all save love's sweet charm,
Unmindful of approaching gale,
They soon were roused by fierce alarm—
A tempest threatened their rowboat frail !

Far to the west an inky cloud
Loomed on the vision grim and drear,
Resounding peals of thunder loud
Filled the maiden's heart with fear.

The lightning flashed across the sky,
The sea gulls screamed in mockery vile,
The wind began a mournful sigh,
Disturbing the sleeping water mild.

With fiendish zeal the hero brave,
Turned wildly back toward the land,
To shun an awful watery grave,
Far below the reach of man.

His strength was vain; the tempest raged,
The billows rolled on every side;
A sad unequal strife was waged
'Tween fragile barque and ocean wide.

All hope was lost. The lovely maid
Upon the floor unconscious fell—
The sky in darkness was arrayed,
The elements rang a woeful knell.

The crew of a schooner homeward bound,
Seeing the plight of the hapless pair,
With speed incredible turned around
And dashed for the spot of dark despair.

'Twas none too soon; the barque o'erturned
Tossing the two on the angry surge,
But strong arms gave the boon they yearned—
Snatching them from eternity's verge.

VI.

Praise

Words of praise have their effect
According to the minds they meet;
They make the arrogant more abject
The wise, more modest and discreet.

VII.

Rough Riders' Relief.

With martial pomp of music gay
And banners streaming on the air,
The bold Rough Riders pressed their way
Toward San Juan in Cuba fair.

Each Rider and each prancing steed
Alike seemed eager for the fray,
That struggling Cubans might be freed
From the galling curse of Spanish sway;

That the battleship and her gallant crew,
Which sunken by the unseen foe,
Might be avenged with honor true,
And to the world their mettle show.

No sign of danger dark was seen,
As on they marched the sun-parched road,
When sudden from a woodland screen
Into their ranks hot Mausers poured.

From right and left from every side
Merciless Spanish bullets sped;
In vain the brave Rough Riders tried
To rally 'mid the volleys of lead.

Into confusion and despair

Were the the gallant soldiers thrown;
Sounds discordant filled the air,
Of the musket roar and the dying groan.

When stoutest wills began to bend,

When all seemed doomed to sore defeat,
The brave Ninth Cavalry of Colored men
Rushed swiftly in to check retreat.

New vigor fills each Rider's soul,

To the order "Charge!" each man responds,
And with the colored soldiers bold,
They charge the breastworks of the Dons.

With deafening yell and deadly aim,

That threw the Spaniards in dismay;
The Ninth boys in Columbia's name,
Helped the Rough Riders win the day.

Then praise the troops of dusky hue!

Speak not their well-earned fame to mar!
They've proven true to the red, white, and blue;
They've shown their bravery in time of war.

VIII.

Conscience.

O! Conscience, man's most trusty guide,
Up life's rugged mountain side;
 If he thy warnings will obey,
 Thou art a friend to cheer his way.
But if he will thy checks disdain,
For harmful bliss of sordid gain,
 Unto his erring soul thou'lt bring
 Grim vengeance like a viper's sting.

IX.

Booker T. Washington.

In cabin rude the germ was sown,
Where freedom was a joy unknown—
 A germ destined a race to lead—
 Humble mankind's cause to plead.
Thus doffing its embryo state,
It donned the armor of the great,
 Surmounted trials dark and drear
 Impressed alike by blame and cheer.
With purpose free from selfish gain,
'Tis his the plighted charge to train
 The hand as well as head and heart,
 To furnish wares at rivalled mart.
Attained has he bright honor true
Regardless of his tawny hue—
 Yea, praised is his intrinsic worth,
 By mightiest rulers of the earth.

De Sun Do Move.

Jes tell me how de Sun gwine rise
Ef de Sun doan move.
'Splain me dat you folks what's wise:
I know de Sun do move.
Take your telemscopes erway;
Doan keer what de stron'mums say;
Ah kin see jes well as dey,
De Sun do move.

How de Sun git 'cross de sky
Ef de Sun doan' move?
Hoccum de Sun doan stay up high
Ef de Sun doan move?
Ef dis here urf am er movin' star,
What mek dem hills keep standin' dar?
I ain seen um go nowhar,
De Sun do move.

XI.

The Egyptian Sphinx.

Oh! huge monster of lifeless stone,
Carved by skillfull hands unknown,
 Standing untold ages past
 Guarding o'er the ruins vast,
From thy musing rouse and tell
How the star of Egypt fell,
 Pharaoh's persecutions vile
 And "the serpent of the Nile."

Tell the sufferings of the Jews
Which like panoramic views,
 With their changeble displays,
 Passed before thy tireless gaze.
Deign to speak some potent word
Of the knell which thou hath heard.
 Why this mute serenity?
 Can it be thou doth foresee
Return of ancient power sublime
To thy dark benighted clime?

XII.

Friendship.

Like a mighty bridge which spans
The rushing river deep,
Bearing as with giant hands
The hosts which o'er it sweep.
When men are by life's woes alarmed,
By surging billows grasped,
A bridge to span their cares is formed
By hands in friendship clasped.

XIII.

High Toned Sal.

Ise jes gorived fum Baltimore.
 Been visitin' daughter Sal;
I'd sårtiny kinder laik ter know
 What's mattér wid dat gal.

Lace curtains hangin' to her floor,
 An' brusslem carpet fine—
All dem high-toned things was sure
 Too much fer dis yer shine.

Slick lookin' folks wld larnin high,
 Come 'roun' er sendin' out
Dey highfalutin talk which I
 Knowed nuthin' 'tall erbout.

De dough fer fancies Sally paid,
 De likes I neber seed;
All dat no sense stravgans, made
 Me 'gusteded indeed.

But w'en she put silks on her back
 An' dimons in her ha'r,
I picked up ma ole knapsack
 An' come erway fum dar.

Gwine ter spend de rest ma days
At home wid Liza Jane;
Can't gib up fer city ways
Ma cabin in de lane.

XIV.

Too Many Clo'es.

“ Jake how you tote so many clo'es ?
It's 'nuff ter take you bref—
Two coats, three pants and overalls on,
Laik you 'fraid you friz ter def.”

“ Doan you meddle wif me ole 'oman ;
Keep kiet laik er mouse,
When Ise out doors in de cole
Ma clo'es is in de house.”

XV.

Udder People's Troubles.

It's easy 'nuff fer us ter tell
Our frien's dey oughtn' mind,
Erbout de many troubles dark
W'ich 'roun dey heart-strings twine.

We can see w'y dey grieves jes laik
Dey hearts is 'bout ter buss ;
But de time we gen'ly grieves is w'en
Desd troubles come ter us.

Den we may 'spress our sorrows fer
De man whats got er sprain ;
But we ain hurt not near so bad
As him dat feels de pain.

XVI.

The Dying Cavalier.

On a battle field at midnight,
When the din of strife was o'er,
When the brilliant beams of moonlight
Shone on scenes of death and gore.
From the village came a mother
Searching for her darling boy,
In all the world there lived no other
To fill her anxious heart with joy.

Where the men lay dead and dying;
On the mother pressed her way,
Scanning each ghastly face while sighing
For the son that was out in the fray.
Close beside a rippling stream
There she saw a prostrate form;
On the night air rang a piercing scream—
It was her son, her long lost charm!

In an instant down she fell
Beside the limp unconscious lad,
Tongues of sages could not tell
The anguish in her heart she had.

From a vial reviving potion
 'Tween his fevered lips she plies,
Her heart then throbs with glad emotion
 For he opens wide his eyes.

But her joy too soon was ended,
 The lad gave vent to groans of pain.
The enemy's dagger had descended
 'Pon his breast, thus help was vain.
"Speak my son" the mother cried:
 "Hearken to your mother's voice."
The sinking, gasping son replied,
 "Your presence makes my heart rejoice."
"And the precepts that you taught me ;
 On your knee long years ago,
Safely through life's cares have brought me
 Now I'm ready for Heaven's shore."
When the dawning had begun,
 When stars had vanished overhead,
The mother and her valiant son
 We're numbered with the silent dead.

XVII.

Splain Me Dat.

My daughter Jane's one thoughtsome chile,
She libs up Norf in hightone style.
Wants me up dar fer erwhile,
Sez she'll feed me till ahm fat,
Buy me new shoes, silk cravat
An' beaver hat.

Ef she gwine do so mnch its qurr
Why I'se bleege ter go so fur;
Huccum ah cain stay right here?
Ah would laik ter know right flat
Wh'on'nt she he'p me whar ahm at?
Splain me dat.

XVIII

Civil Rights.

Rouse ye men of every land,
Grant to all each cherished right !
Give justice to thy fellowman,
Be his color black or white.

Why should the color of his kind
Debar a man from civil claims ;
If brain and character are combined
To place him high 'mong honored names ?

As heartless knaves of every race,
Alike should feel the law's rough hand,
The worthy man of colored face
Should share the blessings of the land.

An honest man though dark his hue,
Should reap whatever his labor gains—
Should any honest course pursue,
Which talent and innate tact ordains.

Allow to all an even chance
While battling through this stormy life;
Let thy fellowman advance
With equal splendor in the strife.

Give credit wheresoe'er 'tis due;
 Bid envy's icy frown depart;
Bid fellowship and charity true,
 Take place of prejudice in thy heart.

Oh! vile oppressor bow thy head
 And read the words with bated breath,
Which fearless Patrick Henry said—
 “Give me liberty or give me death!”

XIX.

Adversity.

To drain adversity's bitter cup
Is but to suffer healing pain;
Its purging fire may kindle up
The talent which has dormant lain.

By wind hard-pressed the school-boy's kite
Rises gently toward the sky:
So master minds on pinions white
Soar above their trials high.

Adversity's pain is most benign
Though hard its cause to understand.
Men's deeds with radiant luster shine
When polished by the world's hard hand.

XX.

De Millon Patch.

Holler 'cross de road dar, Jane,
An' tell dem Johnsing chilluns
Ter drike dey daddies ole gray mule
Out ma patch ub millions!

Wish I had some beans to spar',
I'd send er load clean fru her—
Mek ace Janie, holler quick!
You can't hear me, do yer?

XXI.

Ingratitude.

Oh! base ingratitude, thy poisonous
fangs,
Sendeth forth vile, soul-piercing
pangs
To the heart of him who hath been a
friend,
Upon whose aid thou hath been forced
to depend.

No gifts nor favors kind wilt thou
confess,
No words hath thou thy donor's name to
bless;
Heartless, handless, and unseemly
rude,
Thou curseth the willing hand that
giveth food.

More cruel art thou than winter's chilling
blast,
Forgetting all kind favors in the days that
have passed—

Oh! vile ingratitude thou art more
unkind
Than all other human faults combined.

XXII.

The Fox and the Grapes.

A hungry fox gazed up a tree
In which a bunch of sweet grapes hung;
His eyes told of his inward glee,
At choice repast the vines among.

High in air old Reynard sprang,
But failed to reach the precious prize;
Urged on by hunger's griping pang,
Another spring he vainly tries.

And when he'd jumped till nearly dead,
Plied brain and muscle for an hour;
The cunning fox walked off and said—
"I don't want the grapes, they're sour."

Just as the fox in sullen mood
Denounced the fruit he couldn't claim,
So envious men with slander
Seek to sully their neighbor's name.

After fruitless years are spent,
Through want of tact or proper zeal;
At those to scoff, they are content,
Whose paths are crossed by fortune's wheel.

Oh evil, narrow-hearted, man;
What a wretched state art thine!
Grasped by envy's icy hand.
To all things laudable, thou art blind.

XXIII.

The Auction Block.

Down in a dungeon dark and damp
A slave in anguish lay,
Waiting with ever-increasing dread
The shameful auction day.

Cruel Fate had sealed his doom,
Hope fell to blind despair,
And many sighs and heart-heaved wails
Pierced the prison air.

At night in soul-refreshing dreams
His cabin home appeared,
And all the old familiar scenes
By natal ties endeared.

His children romping on the floor
In ecstasy he viewed,
Only to wake at morn to have
His agony renewed.

The hour rolled round when he was forced
By Fate's relentless hand,
To the auction block thence to be sold
To a distant Southern land.

The voice of the auctioneer rang out
In deep stentorian tones;
All other sounds were hushed except
The slave's despairing groans.

A Georgia planter tall and gaunt,
The surging crowd amid,
Strode forth with independent air
And made the highest bid.

* * * * *

Long, dark years rolled on through which
The slave no news could hear,
Telling of those he left at home,
His lonely heart to cheer.

When lo ! upon a morning bright
While in the cotton field,
He heard soul-stirring martial strains
And gun's defiant peal.

'Twas General Sherman's army,
Marching proudly to the sea,
And he followed it with rapture,
On to blood-bought liberty.

XXIV.

The Traveler's Return.

A traveler on a mountain road,
With eyes bedimmed with tears,
Gazed on the home he had not seen
Since nearly thirty years.

Love unreturned, caused him to leave
The country of his birth;
Forsaking home ties, he became
A wanderer o'er the earth.

He had heard the cannon's roar
In many a foreign land,
Had faced the yawning jaws of death
On desert's scorching sand.

And thus he gazed on pastures green,
The merry rippling rill,
Upon the ivy-covered walls
Of the crumbling village mill:

Towering high above the grove,
The churchspire shining bright,
And the old red school-house on the hill
Loomed clearly on his sight.

He heard the merry tinkling bells
Of flocks upon the hill.
Each hallowed scene of childhood days
Clung to his memory still.

And as he neared his cottage home,
His heart began to swell
With an emotion wild, of which
No mortal tongue could tell.

Strange faces met him at the door
With cool and formal stare;
No friends to welcome his return,
Nor kindred dear were there.

He learned his father had been slain
Upon the field of strife—
Upon an ill-starred man-of-war
His brother lost his life.

Down beneath the spreading oaks
His faltering steps were led,
To the old neglected trampled spot
Apportioned for the dead.

Lying prostrate on the ground,
Half-hid by creeping vine,
He saw the moss-grown marble slab
Which marked his mother's shrine.

Upon its proper base the tomb
He carefully replaced,
And read the rough-carved epitaph,
By knavish hands defaced.

With lightning speed his thoughts were borne
Back through the lapse of years;
The meditation caused his eyes
To fill with blinding tears.

He sighed for the boyhood days which knew
A matchless mother's love—
That night their joyful hands were clasped
In realms of light above.

GLOSSARY.

Ah..... I	Feets..... feet
Ah'm..... I'm	Fer..... for
Ain aren't	Foller..... follow
Aint..... aren't	Friz..... frozen
An'..... and	Fru..... through
A'r air	Frong..... throng
Behime..... behind	Fum..... from
Bleege..... oblige	Fur..... far
'Bout..... about	Gal..... girl
Bref..... breath	Gen'l'y..... generally
Brusslem..... Brussels	Gib give
Cain'..... can't	Git..... get
Charmin'..... charming	Gorived..... arrived
Chilims..... children	Griebe..... grieves
Clo'es..... clothes	'Gusteded..... disgusted
'Cuz..... because	Grub..... food
'Cross.... .across	Groun'..... ground
Dat..... that	Gwine..... going
Dar. there	Gwy..... going
De..... the	Hangin'..... hanging
Dey they	Ha'r..... hair
Def death	He'p..... help
Dem..... them	Highfalutin'.... flowery talk
Eben..... even	'Hime... ..behind
Ebry..... every	Holler..... halloo
Ef..... if	Huccum..... how come
Er... .. a	Instid..... instead
Erway..... away	Jes..... just

GLOSSARY.—Cont.

Johnsing Johnson	Sez says
Keer care	Spar' spare
Bin can	'Splain explain
Laik like	Steppin' stepping
L'arnin' learning	Stronomums astronomers
Lef' left	Ter to
Lookin' looking	Tote carry
'Long along	Trabel travel
Ma my	Trablin' traveling
Meks makes	Treadin' treading
Millons melons	Tryin' trying
Mo' more	Ub of
Moughty mighty	Udder other
Movin' moving	Um them
Nabor neighbor	Urf earth
Nebber never	Visitin' visiting
Nowhar nowhere	Wanter wants to
Norf north	W'ar wear
'Nuff enough	W'en when
Nuthin' nothing	Whar where
Ole old	Who's who is
'Oman woman	Wh'ou'nt why doesn't
Oughtn' ooghtn't	Wid with
Qurr queer	Wif with
'Roun' around	Yer you
Sartiny certainly	Y'own your own
See'd saw	

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 021 929 799 3